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The Selwyn House Senior Players
present

William Shakespeare's

J U L I U S C A E S A R

April 12, 1984

April 13, 1984

April 14, 1984

Selwyn House School Gymnasium
95 Cote St. Antoine
Westmount

Shakespeare's Julius Caesar

As Julius Caesar opens, two tribunes, Flavius and Marullus, drive from the streets plebeians (commoners) who have taken a holiday to join in the triumphal procession that celebrates the return of Julius Caesar to Rome in March of 44 B. C. The tribunes object to the procession because it honors not a foreign conquest but essentially a civil one, Caesar's victory over the sons of Pompey, who had taken over the cause of their dead father, Caesar's great rival. Pompey and Caesar were the two consuls who had headed the Roman republic; now Caesar held sway alone. Flavius and Marullus see that Caesar might easily gain even more power than a single consul would have by exciting in the plebeians an almost religious adoration, a possibility the more potent because his parade coincides with the celebrations associated with the Feast of Lupercal on the famous "ides of March." When the tribunes point out to the plebeians--and to the audience of the play--that only a short time before they had adored Pompey fully as much as they now adore his enemy, the plebeians leave "tonguetied in their guiltiness."

The reactions of Flavius and Marullus to Caesar's ambition are, it turns out, common among other patriots. Prominent citizens like Brutus and Cassius, too, are worried that Caesar might yield to the temptation to accept a crown. That would spell the end of the republic, an institution that had won the veneration of "the noblest minded Romans" because it gave them the dignity of sharing power instead of yielding it unmanfully to a king. So powerful is this aversion to monarchy that when Marc Antony stages a mock coronation for the plebeians as part of the victory celebrations, Caesar feels it prudent to refuse three times to accept the crown, which Antony offers, cunningly, in the shape of a coronet very much like the victory wreath to which Caesar as victor in battle is legitimately entitled. The situation is ripe for conflict between the republican

patriots and the adherents of Caesar. When, accordingly, Brutus shows his fear of Caesar's ambition, Cassius seizes the opportunity of drawing him into a conspiracy to assassinate Caesar.

Julius Caesar was first performed in 1599, when the English nation, in the face of intrigue and plotting, had begun anxiously to speculate whether the successor to Elizabeth I--whoever that might turn out to be--could assume the throne peaceably and in good order. Many scholars argue that Shakespeare, alive to this anxiety, responded by warning in Julius Caesar that political violence might well result in chaos and civil war. As he does in many other plays, Shakespeare in Julius Caesar gives us fairly early the violent act--the murder of Caesar--and then over more than two acts portrays the onset of chaos. First the unity of Rome is split between republicans and the followers of Caesar, each party arming itself militarily against the other. Then this already divided power breaks down even further when the leaders of the two groups fall to quarrelling among themselves: Antony pushes Lepidus aside, while in his own interest, Octavius (who is to become the first Roman emperor, under the name of Augustus, after defeating Antony in action foreshadowed in this play) resists; Brutus accuses Cassius of dishonoring their cause by practising graft and corruption. In battle, the republican side, further weakened by the cross purposes of its leaders, loses to Antony and Octavius.

Three other special points may illuminate the action. First, Julius Caesar shows that special kind of arrogance in power the Greeks called hubris, deriving from a character trait that is at once his strength and weakness. In denying the suit of Metellus Cimber, he claims to be the only Roman who holds on his course "unshaken of motion," like the Northern Star. For Shakespeare, this utterance is bound to call forth the vengeful power of Nemesis. Second,

Shakespeare makes sure we learn the names of the conspirators by having them introduced by name. This "history lesson" he re-emphasizes just after Caesar has been murdered by asking his characters to refer to the fame the scene will acquire for later ages. Third, he develops Brutus as a tragic hero, as well as Caesar. Brutus' strength lies in his noble principles, but this very strength leads him, in opposition to Cassius, to decide wrongly. He allows Antony, for example, to speak at Caesar's funeral, having formerly misjudged him as a mere "masker and reveller" who will not pose a danger to the conspirators. His argument with Cassius over money nearly destroys their alliance. Then toward the end, he insists on fighting a battle at a particular time and place which turn out disastrously for his side of the conflict. Even in the midst of battle, he mistimes his attack. This last error is paralleled by Cassius' decision to commit suicide because he believes his subordinate Titinius has been killed and that therefore the cause as a whole is lost. The nobility of Brutus and Cassius is praised at the end, even though they have both committed suicide. For the Roman soldier, self-inflicted death is a far more noble fate than imprisonment or execution.

This exaltation, from the modern point of view, of suicide is an extension of the philosophy by which all the characters in the play live, that of Stoicism. Shakespeare's understanding of Stoicism appears limited to two ideas: a person ought to worry only about the ills he himself can cure (the rest, being out of his control, are "accidental"); and in the face of great suffering, a man ought to exhibit the greatest coolness and self-control. The primary incidents that refer to Stoicism are Caesar's reaction to Calpurnia's fears ("Cowards die many times before their deaths"), Portia's demonstration that she can bear the pain of a self-inflicted wound in the thigh, and Brutus' reaction to Portia's death. Stoicism as an attitude is also behind the numerous offers by characters of "their throats to cut" if those to whom they speak wish their deaths. The phrase "a Roman death" encapsulates the Stoic attitude to defeat.

S Y N O P S I S O F S C E N E S

Introductory Music:

Ottorino Respighi, The Fountains of Rome,
Roman Festivals,
The Pines of Rome

As recorded by the MSO under Charles Dutoit

At the Curtain: "The Appian Way," from The Pines
of Rome

A C T I

- i. Rome. A Street.
- ii. Rome. A Public Place.
- iii. Rome. A Street.

A C T I I

- i. Brutus' Orchard.
- ii. Caesar's House.
- iii. Rome. A Street.
- iv. Before Brutus' House.

A C T I I I

- i. Rome. Before the Capitol.

I N T E R M I S S I O N

(20 minutes)

A C T I I I (Cont'd.)

- ii. Rome. The Forum.
- iii. Rome. A Street.

A C T I V

- i. Rome. A Room in Antony's House.
- ii. Before Brutus' Tent Near Sardis.
- iii. Within Brutus' Tent.

A C T V

- i. The Plain of Philippi.
- ii. The Battlefield.
- iii. Another Part of the Battlefield.
- iv. Another Part of the Battlefield.
- v. Another Part of the Battlefield.

C A S T

JULIUS CAESAR, a Consul	Hagen Mehnert
OCTAVIUS CAESAR, a Triumvir	Robert Dungan
MARCUS ANTONIUS, a Triumvir	David Verchere
MARCUS BRUTUS, a Conspirator	Erik Blachford
CASSIUS, a Conspirator	Marc-André Audet
TREBONIUS, a Conspirator	Thomas Schopflocher
DECIUS BRUTUS, a Conspirator	Nicholas Adamson
CASCA, a Conspirator	Christopher Clark
CINNA, a Conspirator	Michael Capombassis
METELLUS CIMBER, a Conspirator	Robert Sarfi
CAIUS LIGARIUS, a Conspirator	David Pickwood
CALPURNIA, wife to Caesar	Alexander Kuilman
PORTIA, wife to Brutus	Nicholas Podbrey
FLAVIUS, a Tribune	Francois Crevier
MARULLUS, a Tribune	Jamie Blundell
LUCIUS (doubled with LUCILIUS)	Nicholas Campeau
ARTEMIDORUS (doubled with the SOOTHSAYER)	Andrew Ramsey
TITINIUS, friend to Brutus and Cassius	Alec Thomson
MESSALA, friend to Brutus and Cassius	Andrew Seely
PINDARUS, friend to Cassius	Robert Mason
CLITUS, friend to Brutus	Jason Hreno
STRATO, friend to Brutus	Michael McNally
YOUNG CATO, friend to Brutus	Dominic Lehnert
CICERO, a Senator	Andrew Smith
Servant to Antony	Ian Pickwood

Servant to Octavius
Servant to Caesar
Messenger

James von Moltke
Donald Ramsey
David Feder

CINNA, the POET

(Plebeians take him by mistake for CINNA,
the Conspirator, q.v.)

Paul Capombassis

THE PLEBEIANS

1st PLEBEIAN

(doubled with CARPENTER)

James von Moltke

2nd PLEBEIAN

(doubled with COBBLER)

Fredrik Svenstedt

3rd PLEBEIAN

4th PLEBEIAN

William Black

Douglas Higgins

Kevin Berlin

Andrew Bradley

Christian Campeau

Nicholas Campeau

Kenneth Eakin

Blake Ferger

Eric Gilman

Peter Higgins

Michael Kronish

Marc LeMoine

David Metcalf

Peter Morden

Douglas Naudie

Gary Porter

Ted Schopfloch

Adam Soutar

Michael Verchere

Andrew Waterston

Peter Zukow

THE SOLDIERS

1st SOLDIER

2nd SOLDIER

Mikael Sandblom

Charles Newman

Anders Bard

William Black

Jamie Blundell

Nicholas Campeau

Paul Capombassis

Christopher Clark

Francois Crevier

James Dale

Benjamin Graham

Jason Hreno

Dominic Lehnert

Robert Mason

Duncan McLaren

Michael McNally

Charles Newman

David Pickwood

Andrew Ramsey

Michael Riley

Mikael Sandblom

Thomas Schopfloch

Andrew Seely

P R O D U C T I O N S T A F F

Director and Designer Dr. Byron Harker

Technical Director and Producer
Mr. Marc Krushelnyski

Assistant to the Director Ferhaan Ahmad

Stage Manager Michael McNally

Artistic Consultants Mrs. Susan Strickland
Mrs. Christine Krushelnyski
Mr. Warren Reid

Set Construction Mr. Marc Krushelnyski

Christopher Clark, Mr. Frank Hoffman, Dominic
Lehnert, Alan Marshall, Thomas Schopfloch,
James Soutar, David Verchere

Set Painting Mr. Marc Krushelnyski

Mr. Frank Hoffman, Donald Ramsey, Mrs. Susan Strickland, Thomas Schopfloch, Alec Thomson, David Verchere

Gable Frieze: Design and Painting Kai McCall

Lighting Design Mr. Marc Krushelnyski

Mr. Frank Hoffman, Alan Marshall

Lighting Board Operator Alan Marshall

Follow Spot Christopher Keene

Fixed Video Cameraman Sean Sofin

Portable Video Cameraman Sean McConnell

Sound Effects Recording Mr. Warren Reid
 Eric Bunge

Sound Crew Eric Bunge, Head
 Paul Huang

Costumes Mrs. Nora Ramsey

Miss Vicky Brown, Mrs. Judy Clark, Mrs. Janice
Higgins, Mrs. Helgi Soutar

Costume Master Eric Widdicombe

Properties Matthew Nadler

Stage Crew Jonathan Kay, Head
 Matthew Nadler

Make-Up Mrs. Susan Strickland

Mlle. Hélène Bourduas, Mrs. Kathy Funamoto,
Mrs. Patricia Marsh, Miss Laura Shanahan,
Mrs. Helgi Soutar, and cast members

Dressers and Helpers Backstage

Mr. David Williams, the Costume Makers,
Ferhaan Ahmad, Michael McNally

Tickets Dimitri Kydoniefs Head
 Adam Soutar

Publicity Charles Porteous

Mr. Geoff Dowd, Robbie Drummond, Robbie Mason,
Paul Roman

House Manager

Andrew Ramsey

Anders Bard, James Dale, Ben Graham,
Michael Riley

Swords

Maurice Koshelowsky,

Fights Choreographed by the Participants

Wiring

Wayne Doggett,
Waybrei Electric

Ticket and Poster Design

Clarence Mah

Busts and Publicity Posters

Grades 10 and 11
Art Class

Decorative Posters

Grades 8 and 9
Art Class

Cueing Script

Dr. Byron Harker

Ferhaan Ahmad, Michael McNally
Mr. and Mrs. Marc Krushelnyski

Cueing Script Duplication

The Verchere Family

Script Editor

Dr. Byron Harker

Program and Notes

Dr. Byron Harker

Casting

Dr. Byron Harker

Marc-André Audet, Erik Blachford

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e wish to extend our heartfelt thanks to all the teachers, students, parents and others who have so generously devoted their time and efforts to the various areas of the production.

ND THANK YOU, PARENTS, FOR YOUR BOYS!

